>

Title : Regarding the need to evolve new guidelines for providing 'Swatantrata Sainik Samman' pension to freedom fighters.

SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI): Of late rejection of claims for Swatantrata Sainik Samman pension for freedom fighters under one pretext or other by the Government of India is on the increase. Almost all of them are now in their twilight of their lives. Some of the octogenarians are in receipt of Swatantrata Sainik Samman pension of the states. Also, sizable section remains unaware of the scheme.

When the state pensioners apply for Swatantrata Sainik Samman pension of the Centre, their claims are invariably rejected under one pretext or other by the Centre. Apex courts ruled that state pensioner are ipso facto eligible for Central pension. However, this remains as pipe dream. I understand that Indian States have their own different benchmarks for identifying freedom fighters. Similarly the Central Government is also following a different yardstick for determining such pensioners. These different approaches are not helpful to the freedom fighters in any way.

Apart from this there is another section of freedom fighters. Neither they are getting Swatantrata Sainik Samman pension of states nor the Centre. When they apply for Swatantrata Sainik Samman pension of the Central Government, their claims too are subjected to rejection on various counts, e.g., claim is incomplete, jail life fall short of six months, co-prisoners who have been issued certificates should necessarily belong to the same district, underground period without warrant is invalid, and so on and so forth.

Therefore, the Government of India should evolve new guidelines in such a way that all the real freedom fighters whose numbers would be around some hundreds throughout India are sanctioned with Swatantrata Sainik Samman pension.